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SIPDIS

STATE PASS USDA
USDA FOR FAS/FAA/AO/JWILSON
FAS/OA/DHEGWOOD
FAS/ITP/BOB MACKE
DEPT FOR IIP/G/EUR AND EUR/PPD

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SUBJECT: BIOTECH OUTREACH: GREEN REVOLUTION TO GENE
REVOLUTION CONFERENCE IN BOLOGNA MAY 28-31

1. SUMMARY. WITH SUPPORT FROM PD, USAID AND USDA, MISSION ITALY, AT THE INITIATIVE OF CONGEN FLORENCE, IS COSPONSORING A FOUR DAY CONFERENCE ON AGRICULTURAL BIOTECHNOLOGY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BOLOGNA MAY 28-31. HEADLINING THE PROGRAM IS NOBEL PRIZE PRIZE WINNER NORMAN BORLAUG, AND SWISS SCIENTIST INGO POTRYKUS, THE INVENTOR OF GOLDEN RICE. OTHER LEADING AMERICAN SCIENTISTS INCLUDE ROGER BEACHY, FROM THE DANFORTH FOUNDATION FOR PLANT SCIENCE, AND THREE SPEAKERS SPONSORED BY PD: ALLISON SNOW FROM OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY; CAL QUALSET FROM UC-DAVIS; AND RON PHILLIPS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA. THE SUPPORT OF USAID HAS MADE POSSIBLE THE PARTICIPATION OF LEADING FIGURES FROM AFRICA, INDIA, THE PHILIPPINES, KAZAKHSTAN, BRAZIL, AND MEXICO. THE LAST DAY AND A HALF OF THE CONFERENCE FOCUSES ON THE IMPORTANCE OF BIOTECHNOLOGY FOR THE DEVELOPING WORLD AND ON EU AND ITALIAN VIEWS OF BIOTECHNOLOGY. THE MINISTER FOR SCIENCE FROM SOUTH AFRICA WILL SPEAK AT THE CONFERENCE ON THE ROLE OF BIOTECHNOLOGIES IN REDUCING HUNGER. MISSION ITALY CONSIDERS THIS CONFERENCE AND THE ASSOCIATED EVENTS WE HAVE PLANNED WITH SNOW, PHILLIPS, AND QUALSET IN UDINE, MILAN, TURIN, AND NAPLES TO BE A INTEGRAL PART OF OUR SUPPORT FOR U.S. SCIENCE-BASED POLICY ON BIOTECHNOLOGY. END SUMMARY.

2. THE ITALIAN SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY IN FAVOR OF AGRICULTURAL BIOTECHNOLOGY IS SMALL, BUT INDEPENDENTLY MINDED, AND
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UNABASHEDLY VOCAL IN ITS SUPPORT OF A MORE SCIENCE-BASED POLICY--SOMETHING STILL FAR FROM THE MINDS OF ITALIAN POLICYMAKERS. WE TAKE EVERY OPPORTUNITY WE CAN TO HIT HOME FOUR OF THE SIX ELEMENTS PD HAS PROVIDED WITH THE ROLL-OUT OF OUR REQUEST FOR WTO CONSULTATIONS ON THE EU MORATORIUM ON NEW APPROVALS: THE SAFETY OF BIOTECH PRODUCTS; THEIR BENEFITS TO THE ENVIRONMENT; THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY; AND THE HARMFUL EFFECTS OF EU POLICIES ON THE ADOPTION OF THE TECHNOLOGY IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD. SCIENTISTS ARE IN A GOOD POSITION TO SPEAK ON THSES ISSUES.

3. CONSULATES MILAN AND FLORENCE DREW THIS PLANNED PROGRAM TO EMBASSY ATTENTION LATE LAST FALL, AND BY FEBRUARY EMBASSY HAD AGREED TO UNDERTAKE SUPPORT OF THE CONFERENCE. PD WAS ABLE TO SUPPORT THREE SPEAKERS, WHILE USDA AND USAID PROVIDED AN ADDITIONAL USD 45,000 TO SUPPORT THE TRAVEL EXPENSES OF U.S. AND DEVELOPING COUNTRY SPEAKERS. EMBASSY ESTCOUNS HAS WORKED WITH THE UNIVERSITY IN SELECTING DEVELOPING COUNTRY SPEAKERS, U.S. SPEAKERS, AND IN SHAPING THE POLICY-ORIENTED PARTS OF THE PROGRAM, AND IN CONTACTING GOI OFFICIALS AND ITALIAN PARLIAMENTARIANS. ALTHOUGH THERE ARE OTHER COSPONSORS-- FOR EXAMPLE, THE BRITISH COUNCIL--OUR ROLE IN THE CONFERENCE DESIGN HAS PROBABLY BEEN THE MORE IMPORTANT. OUR CONTACTS WITH AFRICABIO, FOR EXAMPLE, HAS RESULTED IN THE PARTICIPATION OF THE MINISTER FOR SCIENCE FROM SOUTH AFRICA IN THE CONFERENCE.

4. IN SELECTING THE SPEAKERS WE WISHED TO SPONSOR, WE LOOKED AT THE MOST PROBABLE REMAINING SCIENTIFIC DISPUTE ABOUT AGRICULTURAL BIOTECHNOLOGY--LONG TERM EFFECTS ON BIODIVERSITY, OR IN EU-SPEAK, COEXISTENCE. THIS IS AN
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ESPECIALLY SALIENT ISSUE FOR ITALIAN FARMERS, WHO HAVE BEEN TOLD REPEATEDLY BY THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE THAT THE MARKET FOR THEIR HIGH VALUE GEOGRAPHICALLY DENOMINATED OR "TYPICAL PRODUCTS" COULD BE ENDANGERED BY "CONTAMINATION" FROM BIOTECH CROPS AND VARIETIES. ACCORDINGLY, WE INVITED ECOLOGIST ALLISON SNOW FROM OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY TO ADDRESS NAPLES. PROFESSOR SNOW IS KNOWN INTERNATIONALLY FOR HER GENE FLOW STUDIES INVOLVING BIOTECH VARIETIES. ACCORDINGLY, WE INVITED ECOLOGIST ALLISON SNOW FROM OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY TO ADDRESS A TWO-DAY CONFERENCE ON BIOTECHNOLOGY IN NAPLES, MAY 27-28, SPONSORED BY THE CAMPANIE REGION AND THE NATIONAL FARMERS ASSOCIATION. KEY INTERLOCUTORS IN THE ITALIAN BIOTECH DEBATE WILL BE PARTICIPATING IN THE CONFERENCE, INCLUDING THE ITALIAN AGRICULTURE MINISTER. PROFESSOR SNOW

IS KNOWN INTERNATIONALLY FOR HER GENE FLOW STUDIES INVOLVING BIOTECH VARIETIES AND POST RECOGNIZED AN IMPORTANT OPPORTUNITY TO INSERT SNOW'S EXPERTISE INTO THE PROGRAM AGENDA. SHE WILL BE THE ONLY AMERICAN PRESENTER IN THE NAPLES SPEAKER LINE-UP. FOR THE SAME REASONS, WE INVITED WHEAT BREEDER AND PROFESSOR EMERITUS CALVIN QUALSET (U. OF CALIFORNIA DAVIS) TO GIVE A PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF UDINE IN THE NORTHEAST AND MOST ANTI BIOTECH CORNER OF ITALY NEAR THE AUSTRIAN BORDER. IN ADDITION TO HIS CREDENTIALS AS A PLANT BREEDER, PROFESSOR QUALSET FOUNDED THE GENETIC RESOURCES CONSERVATION PROGRAM IN CALIFORNIA. OUR THIRD SPEAKER, REGENTS AND MCKNIGHT PROFESSOR OF GENOMICS RON PHILLIPS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA. IS A SPECIALIST IN

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ACTION IIP-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	A-00	CEA-01	CIAE-00	COME-00
	CTME-00	INL-00	DODE-00	DOEE-00	ITCE-00	DOTE-00	SRPP-00
	EB-00	EXME-00	EUR-00	E-00	FAAE-00	UTED-00	VC-00
	FRB-00	HHS-01	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	ITC-01
	L-00	VCE-00	NASA-01	AC-01	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OES-00
	OIC-02	OMB-01	OPIC-01	EPAU-00	PM-00	ACE-00	SCT-00
	SP-00	SSO-00	STR-00	TEST-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00	EPAE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0109
INFO ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE
EU CANDIDATE STATES COLLECTIVE
EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USDA FAS WASHDC 2682

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MAIZE GENOME MAPPING, BUT ALSO HAS STRONG BIOTECHNOLOGY CREDENTIALS. PROFESSOR PHILLIPS WILL BE SPEAKING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TURIN AND AT MILAN UNIVERSITY. IN OTHER WORDS, WE WILL USE OUR SPEAKERS TO REACH AUDIENCES NATIONALLY.

15. WE EXPECT THE CONFERENCE ITSELF, TO BE HELD OUTSIDE THE CENTER OF BOLOGNA AT THE NEW UNIVERSITY BIOTECHNOLOGY CAMPUS, WILL DRAW PRINCIPALLY AN AUDIENCE OF RESEARCHERS, BUT WE HAVE TARGETED WITH THER ORGANIZERS A HANDFUL OF ITALY'S BEST SCIENCE JOURNALISTS TO COVER BIOTECHNOLOGY. WE EXPECT THE MAY 28 OPENING SESSION, WITH KEYNOTES BY NORMAN BORLAUG AND MONKOMB SWAMINATHAN, TO BE WELL ATTENDED AND COVERED, AND BELIEVE THE FRIDAY MAY 30 SESSIONS ON BIOTECHNOLOGY FOR SUSTAINABILTY AND FOOD SECURITY AND TRANSGENIC CROPS FOR BIOFARMING AND ENHANCED NUTRITION WILL BE WELL ATTENDED. ON SATURDAY, MAY 31 THERE WILL BE APANEL DISCUSSION LED BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON PLANT BIOTECHNOLOGY IN THE EUROPEAN UNION, AND A DISCUSSION ON GMOS AND THE FOOD CHAIN IN ITALY. WE EXPECT PRESS ATTENTION TO THE WTO CONSULTATIONS REQUEST DURING THESE SESSIONS AND PD HAS PREPARED MATERIALS IN ITALIAN FOR DISTRIBUTION TO THE PRESS. EMBASSY ESTCOUNS WILL ATTEND THE ENTIRE BOLOGNA CONFERENCE AND WILL WORK CLOSELY WITH PD TO GET OUR MESSAGE OUT.

16. FULL DETAILS ON THE CONFERENCE CAN BE FOUND AT [HTTP://WWW.AVENUEMEDIA.IT/LINKCONG/GREEN-GENE.HTML](http://WWW.AVENUEMEDIA.IT/LINKCONG/GREEN-GENE.HTML). EMBASSY THANKS DEPARTMENT PD OFFICES, US AID, AND USDA FOR THEIR FINANCIAL
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AND LOGISTICAL SUPPORT OF THIS CONFERENCE.
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